

## “Loose the Bonds of Injustice”

### THE FRONT PORCH CAFÉ SERVES AS AN ENTRY WAY TO HOPE AND TRANSFORMATION

#### *Self-Development of People*

The Front Porch Café in Akron, Ohio, serves up healthy portions of food and friendship for people needing a new start in life.

At the Front Porch, individuals recovering from addiction or re-entering society after spending time in prison can eat a good meal, grow and learn alongside others who share their struggles, and receive guidance on housing and employment opportunities.

When Diretha joined the Front Porch community five years ago, she had been sober and drug-free for a year, but a decade of unemployment threatened the sustainability of her success. She volunteered at the café and attended its support groups. The staff helped her develop a resume and interviewing skills.

These efforts helped Diretha land a job at a catering company, where she has worked for four years. She continues to live a life free from alcohol and drug abuse.

Your One Great Hour of Sharing gifts contributed to Diretha's transformation. The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) made a grant that helped renovate and equip the building that houses the café after Eastminster Presbytery's Committee selected the project for funding. SDOP partners with economically poor people in projects they present, control, own, and are the direct beneficiaries.

The Front Porch Café is part of South Street Ministries, which serves youth and adults in one of Akron's poorest and most racially diverse neighborhoods. “We get people from the church, the recovery world, and the neighborhood who come in just for a place to gather,” says Joe Tucker, the ministries' executive director. By purchasing one of the Front Porch's

reasonably priced meals, neighborhood patrons support its witness to hope.

“We give people a lot of hope and redirection,” Joe says. “We tell people, ‘Hey look, half of our staff are in recovery or in re-entry themselves—we know what it's like. What you are wanting to do is absolutely doable. We believe in Christ, and we will pray with you.’ The consistent reminder of hope is probably the deepest area we have.”

Diretha continues to attend a support group at the Front Porch and its weekly worship service. “If I hadn't gotten involved with the Front Porch, there is a chance I would have started using again and been in prison or even died,” Diretha says.

Your One Great Hour of Sharing gifts help people move themselves from the depths of despair toward vistas of hope. Please give generously.

*Let us pray:*

*Transforming God, we pray  
for people who struggle with addiction.*

*We give thanks for ministries  
like the Front Porch Café that help  
people overcome this challenge and  
begin new lives. May we join them  
in bearing witness to Christ's desire  
that all people experience  
freedom and hope.*

*Amen.*

*This Minute for Mission is available online to download/print for your convenience. [presbyterianmission.org/oghs/resources](https://presbyterianmission.org/oghs/resources)*